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754 wuz a fine lookin boy. Deah wuz so many women attuh him, lots uh people tink one uh dem fix im,[15] but duh doctuh say he die frum pneumonia.

763 "I knowd he wuz gwine die cuz I heahd a owl jis a hootin
•825 duh day befo.[44] Deah's udduh signs uh det too, sech as ef yuh sees a buzzud sailin roun duh elements, das a sho sign. Ef a rat eat yuh dress, yuh musn patch it yuhsef lessn yuh bun duh place fo yuh sew on it, cuz das a sign uh det. Dat happen right heah in dis house fo muh faduh die."

763 She folded her hands in her lap and slowly rocked her chair as she continued. "Wen a pusson die in duh house, ef
795 yuh take em out fo duh ministuh say a few wuds, den deah spirit will hant duh house,[36c] cuz dey jis caahn be happy till dey hab ebryting done propuh an right.[36] I hab heahd spirits roun dis house. Sometime dey call yuh. Wen dey call yuh, dey done come tuh hant yuh an git yuh tuh go weah dey is. Wen dey call, yuh mus say, 'I ain ready tuh go yit.' "

754 The old woman stopped rocking, sat upright, and removed the pipe from between her stained teeth. "An spirits ain all. Deah's witches. Wy, deah's a ole uhmun neah yuh wut people say is a witch wut rides folks.[69] We all leab uh lone. We shuts duh doe ef we sees uh comin. She come lak a night-
[789] meah tuh duh folks wile dey sleepin. But ef yuh puts duh bruhm cross duh doe, yuh kin keep any witch out duh ruhm at night. Witches jis caahn cross obuh a bruhmstick."

Another woman * was scornful about conjure. She tossed her head indignantly as she made known that most of her neighbors for blocks around, her friends, the members of her church, believed in the infallibility of the root worker.

"Wy," she said, "they all believe that everything that happen tuh anybody is cause by some root wukuh.[48] They don't leave anything fuh God tuh do. Ef anybody takes sick, yuh'll fine somebody theah sayin sumpm is wrong with yuh sickness, that somebody 'put down' sumpm fuh yuh. Ef

* *Katie McCarts, 744 Hull Street.*

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deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

"My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

"No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em," [59] said another resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,* an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a plantation known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[59] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

"Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people dat flied off tuh Africa.[59c] I blieb um bout flyin. Some folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an uddubs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

"One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump, I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die." [44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

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754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[15] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root 754 man,[48] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an 755 he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah[10] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

775 "Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once 787 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us [115] that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

"An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in 789 his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh [825] han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 821 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

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"*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs. On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chinese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Edwards* who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

"Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly. "I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

"Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

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BROWNVILLE

I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stoain eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

"I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

"I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

"Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stoain physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

"Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[13]

Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[49] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

"I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 737 West 34th Street.*

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duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

"'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[45b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

"No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

"Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[56a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

WHITE BLUFF

757 824 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 [784] Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs prevailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[64] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat [827] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad • [825] luck.[52] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful chahm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause [826] lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah [825] too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon.

754 759 "Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root man an one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix. Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
•825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but
(759) often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

"I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do anyting roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious tings. Dey could make fahn tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[89a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[89c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

"Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused, "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat."[22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

"Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," volunteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [43] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered, "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, e] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10] an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50] (825) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole (789) kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an 484 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an 789 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house." 787

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane 534 said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an (535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were made.

(281) "Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight (237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis." She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use 824 oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it. It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll 535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab 533 big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene- (533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us, "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [88]

Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

Baker told us that many people in the section refused to eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [65]

"Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [89] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
[777] no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

775 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]
845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[60] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
[825] mal, sometime lak bud.[61] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[61c] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

775 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
776 back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
787 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

SAPELO ISLAND

829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh,
567 yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh
ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey
git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up
in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I
tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

• 825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long
I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh
cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an
riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a
fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he
web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut
duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly
—An Nancy got um.' " [2]

346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp
and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII).[A] The
little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps
shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the
darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the
women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church and took our places on the second from the front middle bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in. The church was filled with a tense quietness.

793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over
his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin,
narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned
later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A. [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a
789 sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire, burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a
484 sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
777 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
784 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
759 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they imported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

795 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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821 796 over the horizon, they would start a sun-dance and bow to the sun.

764 Death watches he knew nothing about, except present-day customs. However, he did say that the snake known as the [825] coach-whip was sometimes wrapped around the neck of a person supposedly dead and its tail put in the person's mouth to see if he were still breathing.

527 We questioned young Smith about the festivals that the other Negroes had described and he told us that during the harvesting season various celebrations are still held.[38]

000 The boat neared the mainland. Our trip was over. As we bade goodbye to our guide, we cast a look of farewell at the dim outline of the tropical island. On the journey homeward impressions received during our stay on Sapelo crowded against one another in disturbing sequence. Innumerable memories assailed us. Faintly the echo of shouting rose and fell in the distance. The measured chanting of voices and the pounding of feet seemed to follow us across the water.

527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[33] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
so long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[45] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX),[A] whose
342 little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*

A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [70] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with 534 honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They 533 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[35] Then they beats 764 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the buryin groun.[34] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still 764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the 782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[38] They say, too, that a frizzle 754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh 231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo 825 than in the ole days." [13]

115 A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

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side the roads in the early morning. Opossums are baked with large sweet potatoes, and raccoons are delicacies no islander will refuse. The woods are also the home of rabbits, wolves, foxes, squirrels, skunks, wildcats, and even bears, all hunted, though bears are said to be rather rare now. The islanders have generally been able to rely on a variety of wild game. One seventeenth-century explorer compiled a list:

> Deer, of which there is such infinite Herds, that the whole Country seems but one continued Park, insomuch that I have often heard Captain Matthew, an ingenious Gentleman an Agent to Sir Peter Colleton for his Affairs in Carolina, say that one hunting Indian had yearly kill'd and brought to his Plantation more than 100, sometimes 200 head of Deer. Bears there are in great numbers. . . . There are Bevors, Otters, Foxes, Raccoons, Possums, Musquasses, Hare and Coneys, Squirrels of five kinds, the flying squirrel, whose delicate skin is commended for comforting, if applied to a cold Stomach, the Red, the Grey, the Fox and Black Squirrels.[34]

The islanders, old and young, are fully acquainted with the ways of the local wild animals. Their partial dependency on these animals as a food source has caused them to pay closer attention to the animals' personalities and habits than would a hunter from another area. Thus their categorization of the animals into intelligent and not-so-intelligent ones is based on day-to-day interaction.[35]

In addition to relying on the natural environment,[36] many islanders continue an economic practice which is still the primary method of consumer exchange in the homelands of their ancestors, selling crafts and services along with their game and farm produce. Individual island families are known for "growing" carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, hairdressers, candlemakers, brickmasons, builders, farmers, ministers, and herbalists (or "rootmen"). Family members tend to follow the traditions set by preceding members of the family and handed down from generation to generation. The old skills brought from Africa or learned during slavery, when everything needed for the plantation was made or serviced by the slaves,[37] have lingered in the protected environment of the Sea Islands. Among the skills highly valued on the islands are carpentry, masonry, and the like—essential

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538 on the Sea Islands for his patience and faith in the Lord's salvation. The buzzard is not an animal that the islanders are ambivalent about. (825) He keeps his distance and they keep theirs; they never kill him for sport but actually depend on him to help them locate dead dogs and farm animals which may have strayed away and got lost in the marsh. Variants of "The Buzzard and the Hawk" are numerous and can be found in just about any collection of African-American tales.[26]

Before beginning this tale the speaker had told a series of well-received stories. He paused at the outset to tease the audience into asking for more.

539 The Buzzard and the Hawk

Mr. Ted Williams

Y'all know—(pauses and addresses the audience)—I ain't taking too much time? *No! Uh uh!!*

Huh? *No!*

Y'all know about the buzzard? *Uh uh*

(Looking at the audience as if puzzled) Y'all didn't hear about the buzzard? *No! (laughing)*

(Again, acting even more surprised) Y'all ain't heard about the buzzard?!!! *(The audience laughs at his expression) Tell us!! Tell us about the buzzard?*

The buzzard and the monkey! *(laughing and clapping) Tell us about the buzzard and the monkey! (more laughing and clapping)*

Louis Jerden, Louie Jerden tell y'all about that now, y'all! (Looks at the older members of the audience.) The old people know about Louie Jerden and the buzzard! *(Elderly members nod and smile knowingly)*

You know the buzzard always was a—a nice educated animal, you know! *(Nods) Um hum! um hum!*

E take e time—(reflecting) just like he done with the hawk. *(Nods and um hums in unison)*

Him and the hawk was sitting down on the limb one day, and he said—Him and the hawk had a consolation [consultation].

Say, "I'm very hungry!!!"

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113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p. 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority;* and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

262 264 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

[226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

000 33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

• 825 538 35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

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protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Guallah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages

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Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die.

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,c]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it.

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death.

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies.

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

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be seen, their familiar haunts, the time they have to leave their graves and their time of return. 975

For instance, all ghosts leave the graveyard at twelve midnight and return at "fust fowl crow"—all but one who is left on guard. They walk ten feet high off the ground, and cover long distances at a surprisingly short length of time. They like certain trees and certain houses. They have never been known to attack a human being physically, but are able to scare one to death. [961]

These spirits are the "on-easy" spirits who are destined for hell on judgment day, but who roam the earth and "hant" the living for they have no place to rest themselves. These "ghosts," "speerits", or "hants" fall into the following categories:[e]

Plat-eye—There are a number of beliefs regarding plat-eye. One is that plat-eye is the spirit of some of "those old timey people what been dead a long time." Another is that plat-eyes come into being when one buries a treasure and places the head of a murdered man in the hole with the valuables. If an intruder approaches the spot, the plat-eye will arise out of the ground in the guise of a six-legged calf or headless hog and frighten the trespasser away.[g] [825] [976]

Boo-hags—are spirits of hags. They are sent to plague and pester the enemies of the voodoo practitioner, or the enemies of the conjure man's clients. The spell can only be removed by a charm made by another doctor-nigger or witch who has superior knowledge of black magic. 954 974

Boo-daddies—are the spirits of doctor-niggers and conjure men released from the body of the living at night for dread purposes.

Drolls—are the spirits of young children who died a painful death. They can be heard, the Negroes say, crying piteously at night in deep swamps and deserted marshland. 975

Spirit-animals—are numerous. One particularly fearsome cat, which sometimes reaches a height of ten feet and explodes before one's eyes when the Lord's prayer is recited backwards, can be seen at Hamilton Hill on Edisto Island, when the moon is young.[b,f,g] 976 825

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Conjure-horses and *Spirit-bears*—have not been heard of since the War between the States. Old-time Negroes say that a conjure-horse could follow a haunted person for miles, traveling well over the tree tops all the way. They breathed fire out of their nostrils, and when they passed by, the sound of hooves beating against some ghostly substance filled the air. Spirit-bears had long shaggy black hair, and mouths like caverns from which enormous red tongues, dripping with blood, protruded. They could climb the tallest tree on Edisto.

LETTERED REFERENCES

[a]The Kuranko also believe that such places as the bush, rivers, and mountains are the domain of the "Nyenne" spirits. The nyenne are quasi-humans, some of whom are sympathetic toward humans while others are harmful. Certain individuals are reputed to have special gifts of vision that enable them to see and make contact with the nyenne and even to secure their help in some undertaking. Similarly, the Limba believe that the bush is the domain of a group of spirits who cannot be seen except by those people who are born with "double eyes" or a special "clear spiritual vision." Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34–35; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 22.

[b]Among the Kuranko of Sierra Leone, there is a belief that certain people have the power of transforming themselves into animals in order to harm others. These "shape shifters" are greatly feared and embody all of the anti-social behavior which the Kuranko people try to combat. See Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 22.

[c]In African society, certain men are considered very proficient in the curative art. They are said to have more power over spirits than others have and do not necessarily use this power for positive ends. They can heal, foretell the future, and "change a thing into something else or a man into a lower animal, or a tree or anything." Their medicine is said to consist of charms, grasses, herbs, and barks taken from the bush. It is the spirit dwelling within these men which gives them their power. The Africans say that without the spirit these "magicians," "healers," and "fortune tellers" could do nothing. Allen Wolsey, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, Their Customs, Religion and Folklore*

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that the old preacher got away from there so fast that he, who was also running with all his strength—couldn't keep him in sight. 539 [775] [226]

At least this story had its explanation. The next day the old preacher and the young man were told that two Negroes after a fishing trip had stopped under a tree in the cemetery to divide their fish. One had a sack full of fish. The other had only two which he had dropped on the ground as he opened the gate of the cemetery.

Truss Gawd

"Plat Eye? Yas'm. De ole folks is talk about Plat Eye. Dey say dey takes shape ob all kind de critter—dawg, cat, hawg, mule, varmint—and I is hear tell ob Plat Eye taking form of gator. I ain see dem scusing one leetle time. You know dat leetle swampy place hind de Parsenage? Dem does call dat Parsenage Branch. Well, one time I hab meh bloom on me en wuz clamming dem days, en de tide been berry late in de ebenin. Hit wuz dusky dark when I hit de Parsenage Lane—light dusky dark. I wuzn't feared none tall. You see, ez I say, I hab meh bloom on me in dem days. En I pass de Cap'n barn en stable. Dere he wuz wid Allan son milkin. En I say: "Good even, Cap'n Bill!' En he gin me back meh word. En I bawg t'ru dat deep white san en I passes de graveyard entrance en I leabes de [gate] open en enters dem dark woods whey de moss wabe low en bresh in you face. En I bin think about Plat Eye. De mind come ter me it wuz good time ter meet em. 539 776 825

"Den I bresh dem weepin moss aside en I trabble de wet mud in meh bare feets en meh shoe bein tie ter meh girdle string. En, Miss Jin, when I bin come ter de foot lawg I could see same ez I see yo now. I could see de foot lawg—dat same old cypress what been dere now. He blow in dat las big September gale. En I bin see Mr. Bull Frawg hit de water—ker plunk! En a cooter slide offen de lawg at meh feets. En, Miss Jin, clare ter Gawd, I bin fer look up at dat cooter den I turn meh eye up en dere wuz a cat—black cat wid he eye lak balls ob fire en he back all arch up en he tail twissin en er switchin en he hair stan on end. He move backward front ob me cross dat cypress lawg. En he bin big. He bin large es meh leetle yearlin ox. En I talk ter em en try fer draw close. En I say ter em; 'I ain fer fear nuttin!'

"En I'se try fer sing: 'He carry me t'ru many ob danger. Because he fust lub me. He guard gainst hant en Plat Eye. Because he fust lub me!'

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[533]

"En dat Plat Eye ain gib me back meh word. He mobe forward en he tail swish en swish same lak big moccasin tail when he lash de rushes. En de sound come to me; 'Child ob Gawd, doan you show no fear.'

"En I is brace up. En meh short-handle leetle clamrake been in meh hand en I sing:

'Gawd will take care ob me.
Walkin t'ru many ob dangers,
Gawd will take care ob me.'

"En den de min come ter me; 'De Lawd heps dem what heps demsef.' Den I raise up meh rake en I come right cross dat critter hed. Ef dat had bin real cat, I'd er pin him ter dat lawg. My rake bin bury deep en de lawg hold em. En I clare ter Gawd, Miss Jin, he up en prance right onder meh feets, dem eyes burnin holes in me en he tail swish-swish lak ole Sooky tail when de flies bad. En meh ire bin raise. I fer struggle wid meh rake en de lawg loose em he grip en I fer pray: 'Gib Addie Strength, O Gawd!'

"En down I come straight t'ru dat critter middle. He stummick ball up same lak de leetle puffer toad-fish. But dat critter ain feel meh lick. En I ressel lak Jacob wid de angel. I bin strong en hab meh bloom on me. It ain 'vail nuttin.

"No, man! Mr. Plat Eye jest es peart en frisky ez fore he bin hit. En I buse em en I cuss em en I say: 'You debbil! Clare meh path!'

"En ef dat critter didn't paw de air en jest raise up dat big bamboo vine, en meh fer hit em ebery jump! So, Miss Jin, I tink: 'Sinner leble dat lawg.' Meh mind come ter me: 'Child ob Gawd, trabbel de woods path!'

"En I turn back en meh haste. En I hit dat path. En I ain bin tarry en jest ez I wuz gibbin Gawd he praise fer deliver me, dere dat cat! Dis time he big ez meh middle-size ox, en he eye bin blaze! En I lam en I lam. En dat rake handle bin wire en bin nail on. En jest ez I mek meh las lam, dat critter raise up fore meh eyes, en dis time he bin big ez cousin Andrew full-grown ox. En he yanish up dat ole boxed pine ez you quits de woods. Yas'm, I ain bleeve in Plat Eye twill den, but I minds meh step since dem days.

"En when I trabbles de deep woods whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl in de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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"Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulphur. Dey is say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. No'm. Dey ain fer trubble me sense dat one time. Uncle Murphy he witch doctor, en he bin tell me how fer fend em off. Dat man full ob knowledge. He must hap Gawd mind in em. So I totes meh powder en sulphur en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd." 539 778 825 789

[p. 354 is blank]

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

THEY WORKED THEIR OWN REMEDY

159
959 We doesn't go to no doctor. My daddy used to cook medicine--herbs medicine: seamuckle, pine top, life everlasting, shoemaker root, ground moss, peachtree leaf, big-root, bloodroot, red oak bark, terrywuk.

Now when my children have fever I boil life everlasting; squeeze little lemon juice in it. Once they go to bed it strike that fever right away. That something very good.

And you hear about children have worm? We get something call jimsey weed. You put it in a cloth and beat it. And when you done beat it, you squeeze the juice out of it, and you put four, five drop of turpentine in it, give children that to drink. You give a dose of castor oil behind 'em. You don't have to take 'em to no doctor.

159
952 If anybody fall down and break bone, my daddy get a towel and pour some water in the basin--put half a bottle of white vinegar in it. He hot the towel and bathe the leg in some mud. Go in the creek and get some mud, band that whole leg up in mud. Couple days you be walking. That knits it right back together.

For a cut, to stop 'em from bleeding, Daddy just get a big spoonful of sugar and throw 'em in there. He say once a cut stop bleeding it's not dangerous. Spider webs grow up in the house and you get that and tie 'em on. (237) Web grow right in there.

If you get sores you get something you call St. John out in the field. And you see those little bump grow on a gum tree; you get them and you [illegible] them two together and just tie 'em right on that wound. That heals right [illegible]

When my little boy got a nail stuck in his feet, I got a basin of [illegible] water with physic salt and let him hold he feet down in that--draw the poison out. Then I tie a piece of butts meat on it. His foot get better.

159
757 You hear about some little thing run back in its hole--fiddler crab? We use that for whooping cough. Catch the crab, boil 'em up with something
● 825 else--I can't 'call the name--and strain 'em through a white cloth. Give that for drink. It'll cure the running whoop.

759 All this from old people time when they hardly been any doctor. People couldn't afford doctor, so they had to have and guess. Those old people dead out now, but they worked their own remedy and their own remedy come out good.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

192 [298] *Hippo* for ipecac, probably from the dialect of the cockney English sailors who fetched it home from the Brazils. The British pharmacopoeia of 1725 calls it "hippocachuana, hippechachuana, hippo for short."

Gaum (or *gorm*), to daub or smear with spilled victuals and grease; similarly *gaumandize* (*gormandize*) not to eat greedily, but to daub or to spatter oneself with food.

Proper Names (Onomatopeia)

192 .825 *Bloody noun*, the big swamp bull-frog.

Fry-bakin' frog, the small pond-frog, supposed to say "fry bacon," "tea-table."

Higguhri-hee and *Cuckatoo*, both being terms for the great horned owl.

192 *Nickuhdemus*, *Buhrabbus*, and *Polydo'*, all favorite, mouth-filling names, common in sermons and religious arguments: "Ent de Scriptuh say een de fo'teen chaptuh een Nickuhdemus, dat de lab'ruth wut' 'e hire?"

Rebus is of unknown origin, being coupled only with Revelation, meaning from Alpha to Omega: "Uh bin t'ru da' t'ing frum Rebus spang to Rebelashun."

[825] *Po'Jo*, the long-legged, long-necked Blue Heron.

Popular Etymologies

Consecrate lye (*concentrated*);* *middle-night*, *middle-day*, *middle-blouse*, for mid-night, mid-day, middy-blouse; *inflummashun*, for information; *sparruhgrass* for asparagus;* *Sawlketchum* for Salkahatchie, a tide-water river of South Carolina, for which the commoner corruption among the whites is "Saltcatcher"; *preecher on de sukkus* (circuit); *locus preechuh* (local preacher); *petty-* or *patty-auguh* for piragua, pirogue; *Saa'bint Day* (Servant's day) confused with Sabbath Day; *muffle-dice* for hermaphrodite; *grin' salt*, said of a hawk or vulture circling aloft; *carryin'* for carrion; *peach omelet* for peach marmalade; *curly flower* for cauliflower;* *Florida lime* for chloride of lime; *sweet religion* for sweet alyssum;* *nutten-aigs* for nut-megs.

*Not exclusively Gullah; commonly found elsewhere.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34[A]) how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome. it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana," [32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 226--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

123 I assured her, when she paused for breath, that I realized the truth of what she
784 said. She told me how she had been out picking berries that morning, and a rattlesnake
825 had charmed her little boy. "I call' to him an' he couldn' move—he jus' look at the
159 snake like this." (She stooped down and stared fixedly ahead of her.) "When I pull' him away, the snake went shzzzz! and the poison went into me." Then it was that she strode into the middle of the yard and called upon Gabriel.

159 The next morning I was distressed to find that Laura had been taken to jail
123 again. My cook, Julia, and I talked the situation over and decided we would be easier in our minds if we knew she ought to be there. Though noisy the day before, she appeared to be harmless. Dr. Cate, the county physician, kindly took us to the jail at noon, as he also wished to see her. When we reached her cell, he asked, "Well, Laura, what are you here for?" Her reply impressed me very much. "It's not for drinkin' or fightin'—it's a religious affair." But when she went on to say, "I'm havin' a religious war, and I'm puttin' up a dam' good fight," I realized she had better stay
(559) where she was until her ardor cooled:

Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment
Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment Bart
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment Bart
My Lord call you
At the Judgment
My Lord call you
At the Judgment Bart
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment Bart
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment Bart

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Mid-wives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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St. Helena Island

757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[777] less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
[764] be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[789] over the coffin from one person to another in order to prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
774 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.